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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes discussions from a policy options conference devoted to the needs for personnel preparation related to the implementation of Public Law 99-457, Part H, which provides services to infants and toddlers with handicapping conditions and their families. The three policy questions identified as the most significant were: (1) what policies can be developed to extend and expand training resources and populations of trainees? (2) how do states develop standards that address all personnel, including those already in the field? and (3) who will provide inservice and preservice training? The criteria used to determine the relative merit of each of the options were cost, administrative feasibility, multidisciplinary orientation, meeting acceptable personnel standards, increasing the marketability of the positions, and increasing the numbers of staff available. The group also identified 10 major barriers to full implementation of personnel development strategies, including lack of Part H staff, internal system barriers and resistance to change, and lack of evidence of effectiveness of inservice training. Recommendations concerning the desired federal role were also made, including targeting resources at key areas of need such as postdoctoral leadership training, giving priority to inservice training, and establishing a national job bank. Includes 12 references. (DB)

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Carolina Institute for Child and Family Policy

Personnel Preparation Options: Ideas from a Policy Options Conference

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May 1990

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a summary of discussions held by a small group of participants at a policy options conference devoted to the needs for personnel preparation related to the implementation of P.L. 99-457 (Part H), Infants and Toddlers with Handicapping Conditions and their Families.

The process followed in the two day group discussion was to identify key policy issues, to seek policy options to meet these issues, to explore consequences of the policy options considered, to provide a full range of the options and share these thoughts with others.

The three policy issues identified as the most significant were:

(1) What policies can be developed to extend and expand training resources and populations of trainees?

(2) How do states develop standards that address all personnel, including those already in the field?

(3) Who will provide inservice and preservice training?

The criteria used to determine the relative merit of each of the options were COST, ADMINISTRATIVE FEASIBILITY, MULTIDISCIPLINARY ORIENTATION, MEETING ACCEPTABLE PERSONNEL STANDARDS, INCREASING THE MARKETABILITY OF THE POSITIONS, AND INCREASING NUMBERS OF STAFF AVAILABLE. Each of the options was weighed against these criteria. In the first issue on HOW TO EXTEND AND EXPAND TRAINING RESOURCES, one of the most popular options was to "earmark part H funds for personnel preparation. "Another option that was well regarded was the "networking of training programs," to encourage comprehensive planning by training institutions. "Equalizing salaries to other child care positions" was seen as desirable but hardly practical under current circumstances.

On issue #3, HOW DO STATES SET STANDARDS?, some of the most favored options were to have "Professional organizations set standards," "Extend the standards already established for ages 3-5," (although that option was limited by the fact that it reflected only educational standards), and "Allow standards to be set through approved training institutions."

In Service Training Programs

The working group summarized a set of suggested components of statewide inservice training programs as follows.

1. There needs to be a policy to establish an inservice training program with funds allocated for each state.
2. A structure should be developed to promote the statewide comprehensive system of personnel preparation.
3. There must be a joint responsibility of agencies involved.
4. There must be policies focused upon training for entry skills and continued competency.
5. Training must be geographically accessible and culturally relevant for the trainees.
6. Training programs must include private service providers.
7. The multidisciplinary service model should be the unit of training.
8. Training must address family collaboration and case management.

Barriers to Implementation

The group also discussed the serious barriers that exist to the full implementation of a set of strategies for personnel development for the early childhood program. The major barriers were seen as:

1. Lack of Part H staff.
2. Many models but limited resources.
3. Existing policies may limit time spent on training.
4. Internal system barriers and resistance to change.
5. Need long range planning for personnel preparation, since the mode of operation in many states is one of "crisis management."
6. Absence of available positions in which newly trained personnel can be employed.
7. Lack of evidence of effectiveness of inservice training.
8. States must plan to train currently nonqualified or noncertified personnel.
9. There is a need to coordinate old personnel preparation mechanisms to meet the needs of infants and toddlers and their families.
10. Fear that professionals will lose touch with their own disciplines while participating in multidisciplinary preparation.

Desired Federal Role

Finally the group wished to describe some of the elements of a desirable and effective federal role that could be played in personnel preparation. The following recommendations represented the consensus of the group.

1. Targeted resources need to be directed at key areas of need such as postdoctoral leadership training.
2. The federal government should give priority to inservice training.
3. The Federal Interagency Coordinating Council (FICC) should act as a catalyst to coordinate federal resources.

4. A national job bank should be established for personnel working with children with handicapping conditions, ages 0-5, to aid with recruitment problems.

5. The federal government should encourage foundations and other public and private groups to assist in personnel preparation.

6. The practitioners in the field need to ask federal leaders "What can we do to help you?"

Generic Policy Issues

There appear to be a number of generic issues that extend beyond the individual issues in personnel preparation. These represent policy choices that must be made between opposing poles. Shall we choose state agency control or university control, single agency direction or multiple agency coordination, preservice or inservice programs, and numbers of personnel needed vs. maintaining personnel quality standards. In each of these choices there are advantages and disadvantages that need to be weighed for their consequences. The decision for each state as to the place on these continua that is best for them may vary according to the conditions that are faced in that state.

Personnel preparation is one of the most essential elements in an effective plan to implement PL 99-457, (Part H), the program to assist infants and toddlers with handicapping conditions and their families. Unless service delivery programs can employ qualified personnel, the rest of the planning may be for naught.

The Carolina Policy Studies Program's (CPSP) mission is to track the implementation of that legislation in the fifty states. CPSP is committed to discovering what is happening and why it is happening in the key areas of program development. Personnel preparation is one of these areas.

There is a body of information now available that testifies to the slow movement on obtaining effective personnel preparation resources. For example,

1. A survey by Bruder, Klosowski & Daguio (1989) found a nationwide lack of coordination between higher education and state agencies in personnel preparation.
2. States have reported slower progress on developing personnel standards and a program for assuring the presence of adequate personnel than in other areas mandated by the legislation. (Harbin & Terry, 1989)
3. A CPSP survey by Yoder and Coleman (in press) revealed huge personnel shortages at all levels in Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Speech Language Pathology personnel.
4. Other CPSP analyses (Palsha, Bailey, Vandivere & Munn, in press) revealed considerable staff turnover in early childhood programs and staffing patterns that fell far

short of standards being suggested by various professional associations (Palsha & Rennells, 1990).

In addition, the long lead time needed to gear up a training program was pointed out in a policy alert by Gallagher (1989). New roles such as case managers or early interventionists are being projected. Professionals who have been prepared to deliver direct services to the client now may face the task of learning new supervisory and consultant roles.

In order to explore what personnel preparation issues appeared the most important to a representative group of persons in the early childhood field, and which policy options could be considered to cope with those issues, we conducted a policy option conference in Chapel Hill on September 7-8, 1989. This report summarizes the results of that conference. This report will include:

1. A discussion of the general process followed in the policy option work conference.
2. A discussion of the particular options and consequences related to policy issues generated by this group.
3. A summary of the barriers to implementation, and recommendations for policy action on the part of the federal government.
4. A summary of some generic policy issues raised in the conference.

POLICY OPTIONS WORK CONFERENCE

One of the problems in generating policy options to meet a particular policy issue is that there are few systematic procedures to look at a full range of options, or to consider the often unanticipated consequences of a new policy option (Campbell & Mazzoni, 1977; Steiner, 1981).

Governmental decisions are often made under severe time pressures, and predigested solutions are often presented, so that a full consideration of alternatives is never achieved (Wildavsky, 1979). The Carolina Policy Studies Program has developed a procedure that allows for a more systematic way of considering available policy options: a policy options work conference. This approach is built upon the model of policy development developed by Gallagher (1981) and is a variation of the "focus group" approach (Finn, 1982; Morgan & Spanish, 1984). This policy options procedure was first piloted in a summer workshop at the University of North Carolina in June 1988.

This small group process brings together 12-15 persons who are knowledgeable about the issues at hand but who come from differing perspectives and who have differing responsibilities. Parents, college professors, agency personnel, policy analysts, and service providers all contributed to these discussions. The participants in this conference are listed in Table 1. Six steps complete this policy options process, as follows:

1. **Identification of Key Policy Issues**. The group is asked to 'brainstorm' about all of the major policy issues that remain to be solved in a given topic area (e.g. eligibility, finance, etc.). The leader writes these ideas on a chart or blackboard. The group is then asked to vote upon the three most significant issues which become the focus for the rest of the work conference.
2. **Identification of Policy Options**. Each of the three issues is addressed, in turn, and the group members are asked to provide a variety of policy options that they

TABLE 1
PERSONNEL PREPARATION POLICY OPTIONS WORK GROUP
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believe should be considered in coping with each issue. This step generally results in seven or eight options per issue for further consideration. Sometimes, a consolidation of options may be considered before the group goes on to the next step.

3. **Consequences of Policy Options**. For each of the options under consideration the group is encouraged to present the various positive consequences (e.g. more children will be served, interagency coordination will be enhanced, etc.) and negative consequences (cost would be too great, not enough trained personnel to carry out option, etc.). A range of potential consequences is developed for each option.
4. **Policy Issue Map**. The resulting information provides a full range of policy options, and their consequences, for each of the key policy issues identified by the group.
5. **Group Review**. After the conference, the members of the group are sent copies of the draft report for their comments, additions, and deletions.
6. **Product Dissemination**. The resulting manuscript is shared with the Interagency Coordinating Council chairpersons, Part H coordinators, the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NEC*TAS), and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

IDENTIFICATION OF POLICY ISSUES

The group was asked to brainstorm all possible policy issues which occurred to them related to personnel preparation connected with the

implementation of PL 99-457 (Part H). This discussion resulted in the listing of 27 issues. When the group reviewed its work, it decided that all of these issues could probably be incorporated in five overarching policy issues, as follows.

1. WHAT POLICIES CAN BE DEVELOPED TO EXTEND AND EXPAND TRAINING RESOURCES AND POPULATIONS OF TRAINEES?
2. WHO SETS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS?
3. HOW DO STATES DEVELOP STANDARDS THAT ADDRESS ALL PERSONNEL, INCLUDING THOSE ALREADY IN THE FIELD?
4. HOW WILL THE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL PREPARATION BE MONITORED?
5. WHO WILL PROVIDE INSERVICE AND PRESERVICE TRAINING?

After further discussion the group ranked these issues in order of importance. They chose questions #1, 3, and 5 as the issues for which policy options would be generated and evaluated.

ISSUE #1: WHAT POLICIES CAN BE DEVELOPED TO EXTEND AND EXPAND TRAINING RESOURCES AND POPULATIONS OF TRAINEES?

Options

1. Earmark some of Part H resources for personnel preparation.
2. Qualified personnel serving 0-3 have salaries comparable to other disciplines or ages.
3. Networking among personnel preparation programs across agencies and disciplines.
4. Special allocations should be provided from federal agencies for the preparation of personnel to serve under Part H programs.

5. Reserve training funds to help states in early stages of personnel preparation.

6. Scholarships for individuals committed to going into the early childhood intervention field.

7. Financial support for programs to train trainers.

The criteria for choosing between these options were determined by reviewing the consequences generated spontaneously by members of the group. The major criteria used to evaluate the options were determined to be:

1. Cost.
2. Administrative feasibility.
3. Multidisciplinary orientations.
4. Meeting acceptable personnel standards.
5. Increase the marketability.
6. Affects numbers of staff available.
7. Other.

Figure 1 summarizes the group's judgments of the negative and positive potential of each option against one or more of the criteria. These values were obtained by having three judges on the CPSP staff rate the consequences statements in terms of which criterion was being used and place them in the matrix. The reliability of the three judges statements was checked through the independent rating of the statements. The overall reliability of the three judges was .70.

In instances where there were differences, a meeting between all three judges reached a consensus judgment on the appropriate criterion.

Figure 1

Issue 1: What policies can be developed to extend and expand training resources and populations of trainees?

Options	Cost	Admin. Feasibility	Multi-Discipline	Acceptable Standards	Market - ability	Relieve Personnel Shortage	Other
1. Earmark some of Part H resources for personnel prep		+ +	+		+	-	+
2. Qualified personnel serving 0-3 would have salaries comparable to other disciplines	- - -		+ -		+ + + + +	+ -	
3. Networking among training programs across agencies and disciplines	++	+ + - - -	+ -				+
4. Special allocations from federal agencies for Part H personnel	- -	- -	-	-	+ -	+ + + +	
5. Reserve training funds for states in early stages of personnel preparation	-	+					
6. Scholarships for individuals committed to going into ECSP field	+	- - -		+ -	+ + -	-	
7. Financial support for programs that train trainers	-	+		+ - -		+ -	

The various options that the group generated are listed on the left side of Figure 1. These options include the earmarking of some Part H resources, the equalization of salaries, the networking of training programs across agencies and disciplines, special federal allocations for Part H personnel, scholarship funds and funds to support the training of leadership personnel.

Across the top of Figure 1 are those criteria that seemed to be important in weighing one option against the other. One constant criterion of any policy decision is always the cost of the program. Additional criteria in this instance included how administratively feasible is the option, whether the option enhances the multidisciplinary character of the program, and whether it will have an effect on the marketability or attractiveness of positions for both consumers and providers of training. One final criterion employed was whether the option would have an impact on the current shortage of personnel or programs. The pluses and minuses in Figure 1 represent the various comments of the participants. Option #1, earmarking Part H resources for personnel preparation, received a variety of positive ratings. Some of the comments leading to the positive ratings are given below.

> "Takes pressure off the Part H coordinator."
>
> "Allows for long-range planning because resources would be given."
>
> "Has potential to improve relationships between higher education and state agencies."

However, as is true of all the options, this choice is not free from some negative comments. In this case, an example of the questions raised was:

> "Why do we need more money for this group when others (professionals working with other age groups) don't receive special funds."

Option #3, the networking of training programs, also received a number of positive comments among which were:

> "That it could allow reciprocal efforts and increase collaboration of other kinds of activities."
>
> "Could contribute to coherent and cohesive planning."

There is still the recognition, under administrative feasibility, that "it would be difficult to keep current" and "might take additional staff time to implement."

Another option, equalizing salaries for professionals who serve infants and toddlers and their families to match those paid to professionals who work with other age groups, was seen as having a major positive effect on incentives for bringing people into the field, but such an option would be expensive, a negative consequence.

Essentially, the matrix helps highlight the various advantages and disadvantages of each of the options. In the end, the decision makers have to choose which of the positives or negatives they would wish to accept as consequences of one particular option, or some combination of the options listed.

ISSUE #3: HOW DO STATES DEVELOP STANDARDS THAT ADDRESS ALL PERSONNEL, INCLUDING THOSE ALREADY IN THE FIELD?

Another issue for which the group generated options and consequences was the development of standards as described below:

Options

1. Develop standards for early interventionists, a new discipline and occupational category.
2. Professional organizations in each discipline set standards.
3. Keep existing standards.
4. Establish standards to match reimbursement.
5. Extend downward in age and expand existing standards for professional groups.
6. Provide for multilevel certification within and across disciplines.
7. Develop functionally defined program standards for multidisciplinary assessment.
8. Set standards by approving programs of training institutions.

The criteria by which these options were judged (i.e., cost, administrative feasibility, etc.) for Issue #3 were the same as those applied to Issue 1. The positive and negative consequences that were noted by the group for these options as rated by the three judges are summarized in Figure 2.

The options are listed at the left side of Figure 2 and the criteria such as cost, administrative feasibility, multidisciplinary impact, etc. are listed across the top of Figure 2. One can note a particularly favorable

FIGURE 2

Issue 3 : How do states develop standards that address all personnel, including those already in the field?

Options	Cost	Admin. Feasibility	Multi-Discipline	Acceptable Standards	Market-ability	Relieve Personnel Shortage	Other
1. Develop standards for Early Interventionist	+	+ - -	+ + -	+		-	-
2. Professional organizations for each discipline sets standards	-	+ - -	+	+ + + + - -	+ - -	- -	+
3. Keep existing standards	+	+		- - - - -		-	
4. Establish standards for matching reimbursement	+ + -	+ -		-		-	-
5. Provide for multi-level certification within and across disciplines	- -	- -	+	-		+ + -	+
6. Develop functionally defined program standards		+ +		- + - -	-		
7. Extend and expand standards already established for 3-5	+	+ +		- - +	+		
8. Set standards by approving training institutions				+ -	+		-

response to Option #2, professional organizations setting standards. Some of the advantages for that choice were seen as,

> "Might be implemented more quickly than with the slow process of state government"
>
> "It provides one source for each discipline for standards instead of fifty state standards.

On the other hand, some people reasoned that it was foolish to "set standards for positions with such low pay" and that "some disciplines might not have organizations that are prepared to set such standards."

Group members found a number of negative consequences likely to flow from Option #3, keeping the existing standards. They felt that such a move would not "assure proper infancy training" and "assumes that there are no special skills needed in working with infants." They also pointed out that some professional disciplines have no standards at present that apply to infants and toddlers and their families.

A number of members felt positive about Option #7, extending and expanding the standards that are already established for ages 3-5. This was seen as "building a more effective 0-5 program," "would be less expensive," and "would mute some problems of policy transition issues from ages 3-5". On the other hand, some felt that the "3-5 standards were not applicable to this population" and that "it primarily would work with educational standards rather than standards from the other disciplines." As one can see in Figure 2, there are positives and negatives stated for each of the options and it becomes important to pursue the nature and potency of the anticipated consequences for each of the options.

Overall, the group seemed to favor the options of professional organizations for each discipline setting standards, or expanding standards already established for ages 3-5, or allowing standards to be set through the mechanism of approving training institutions. All of these choices deserve some review, as does the option of developing separate standards for early interventionist positions or roles. It is likely that any comprehensive program and policy would contain some combination or mix of desirable options, rather than a selection of only one strategy.

ISSUE 5: SUGGESTED COMPONENTS OF STATEWIDE INSERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS

The group approached the question of inservice training in a different fashion from the previous two questions. Instead of reviewing options and their potential consequences, they wished to provide a comprehensive set of components for a strong statewide inservice training program. The group's thoughts are listed below with the principles in italics and the explanation listed below each principle.

1. *THERE NEEDS TO BE A POLICY TO ESTABLISH AN INSERVICE PROGRAM, WITH FUNDS ALLOCATED, STATED AS A PRIORITY FOR EACH STATE PARTICIPATING IN P.L. 99-457, PART H.*

   The first principle is designed to stress the importance with which this topic is viewed. Inservice training was deemed to be critical to the success of the Part H program regardless of what other personnel preparation commitments are made.

2. *THERE MUST BE A STRUCTURE DEVELOPED TO PROMOTE THE STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL PREPARATION, AND LEADERSHIP FOR THIS EFFORT MUST BE DESIGNATED. THE STRUCTURE MUST ADDRESS ALL DISCIPLINES AND LEVELS (PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL).*

   (A) *THE STRUCTURE MUST PROVIDE FOR SYSTEMATIC, **ONGOING** AND **SELF-RENEWING** NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.*

   (B) *THERE MUST BE IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES TO MEET THESE NEEDS.*

   (C) *THERE MUST BE A MECHANISM FOR MAKING DECISIONS.*

   (D) *THERE MUST BE PARTICIPATION BY THE STAKEHOLDERS, THOSE WHO PROVIDE AND CONSUME THE SERVICES.*

   (E) *THERE MUST BE A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE DECISION MAKING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION.*

   (F) *EFFORTS MUST BE COORDINATED, AND WE SHOULD **NOT** IMPOSE TWO OR MORE SETS OF STANDARDS FOR VARIOUS PERSONNEL INVOLVED.*

   Unless there is both stakeholder participation and designated leadership, the experience of this group suggests that the program will wax and wane with budget availability and the accident of temporary leadership. Such a program was seen as important for all of the professional disciplines.

3. *THERE MUST BE A **JOINT** RESPONSIBILITY OF AGENCIES INVOLVED.*

   Coordination to be effective must include a fair allocation of responsibility and decision making.

4. *THERE MUST BE POLICIES FOCUSED ON TRAINING FOR ENTRY SKILLS **AND** CONTINUING COMPETENCY.*

   A continuous process of personnel preparation is needed at both preservice and inservice levels.

5. *TRAINING MUST BE GEOGRAPHICALLY ACCESSIBLE AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT FOR THE TRAINEES.*

   The diverse needs of these infants and toddlers and their families require that attention in the training program be paid to important cultural differences.

6. *TRAINING MUST INCLUDE PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDERS.*

   The private sector needs to be included as trainers and trainees, where appropriate, in any comprehensive personnel preparation program.

7. *THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY SERVICE MODEL SHOULD BE THE UNIT OF TRAINING. THIS CONCEPT SHOULD BE/CAN BE INCLUDED IN **PROGRAM** POLICIES.*

   In order to teach interdisciplinary cooperation within the service units such behavior should be modelled in the training unit. Interdisciplinary work is easy to discuss but hard to implement so models of effective practice are the best teaching device.

8. *TRAINING MUST ADDRESS FAMILY COLLABORATION AND CASE MANAGEMENT, TWO CRITICAL AREAS ADDRESSED IN THE LAW, BUT NOT THE PROVINCE OF ANY ONE DISCIPLINE.*

   There are many new responsibilities that accompany the Part H legislation and are relevant to all professional disciplines. Inservice training should focus particularly upon such key responsibilities.

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Finally, the policy work options group wished to comment on major barriers to implementation of policy and address the preferable role of the federal government in personnel preparation.

There are many barriers that stand in the way of effective personnel development in the view of the group. They felt it necessary to be specific about some of the major barriers in order to anticipate them and plan to overcome them.

1. *LACK OF PART H STAFF.*

   The level of Part H staff is currently not sufficient to carry out a comprehensive personnel preparation program.

2. *VARIETY OF MODELS TO CONSIDER? WHERE DO WE GET THE RESOURCES?*

   There may be difficulty choosing between the diversity of preparation models used in the various disciplines. Such decision making is made more difficult by the very limited fiscal and personnel resources allotted to this program.

3. *OTHER **POLICIES** ARE BARRIERS, FOR EXAMPLE POLICIES THAT DICTATE THE PERCENTAGES OF TIME THAT MUST BE SPENT IN DIRECT SERVICES. THERE CAN BE CONFLICT BETWEEN TIME NEEDED FOR DIRECT SERVICES DELIVERY AND TIME NEEDED FOR TRAINING.*

   Although much training is projected to take place on-site, there has traditionally been very little recognition of the need to involve service personnel in the training or to allot time for them to participate.

4. *INTERNAL SYSTEM BARRIERS AND BUREAUCRATIC RESISTANCE TO CHANGE.*

   The general resistance to change has little to do with personnel preparation specifically but, nevertheless, represents a significant barrier in the minds of many.

5. *LONG TERM PLANS FOR PERSONNEL PREPARATION ARE NEEDED, BUT CRISIS ORIENTATION IS THE MODE OF OPERATION IN MANY STATES.*

   One of the greatest barriers felt by the group is the observable tendency to crisis management at the state level with limited attention paid to long range planning. It is just such long range planning that is needed in this area.

6. *ABSENCE OF PRE-EXISTING POSITIONS INTO WHICH TRAINED PERSONNEL CAN GO.*

   Although reform minded professionals may strongly advocate for multidisciplinary preparation, there may be few existing personnel vacancies that require or value such an orientation.

7. *LACK OF EVIDENCE ON EFFECTIVENESS OF INSERVICE TRAINING IN PRACTICE.*

   Traditional inservice programs have not had a good track record in terms of improving service delivery. Many new models are needed and should be encouraged.

8. *PRE-TRAINING VS. RE-TRAINING; STATES <u>MUST</u> PLAN FOR TRAINING NON-QUALIFIED OR NON-CERTIFIED PERSONNEL.*

   There are many less than qualified persons now at work in existing infants and toddlers programs. Unless there is a specific plan to upgrade their skills and knowledge they will

set a poor example for the new recruits to these expanding programs.

9. *NEED TO COORDINATE **OLD** MECHANISMS WITH NEW TARGET GROUP, 0-3, ACROSS AGENCIES.*

   Even successful personnel preparation programs that have focused upon an older group of children may have to be modified to take into account the special needs of this age group, particularly the strong family and interdisciplinary style expected in the service delivery programs.

10. *FEAR THAT PROFESSIONALS MAY HAVE ABOUT LOSING TOUCH WITH THE TRAINING FOR THEIR OWN DISCIPLINE; THIS DESIRE FOR IDENTIFICATION WITH DISCIPLINES IS NEEDED AND SHOULD BE MAINTAINED.*

    Despite the desirable aspects of multidisciplinary programs, each professional has a home discipline that he/she wishes to identify with. That need should be respected and taken into account, in the menu of training opportunities that are made available.

A DESIRABLE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ROLE IN PERSONNEL PREPARATION

There was general agreement by the group that the federal government should be playing a significant role in the personnel preparation area. That role was not merely to provide additional resources, although that was an important aspect of its responsibility, but also to provide a model of that coordination between agencies and professional disciplines that is requested of the states.

The following recommendations represent the work group's major suggestions to the Office of Special Education Programs, the lead federal agency in this legislative implementation of P.L. 99-457 (Part H).

1. *TARGETED RESOURCES NEED TO BE DIRECTED AT KEY AREAS OF NEED-ONE SUCH AREA IS POSTDOCTORAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING.*

This recommendation recognized the need to build an infrastructure of personnel preparation in these professional disciplines through creating a cadre of highly sophisticated preparers who will answer the question, "Who prepares the preparers?"

2. *THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE PRIORITY TO INSERVICE TRAINING EFFORTS.*

In other parts of this report the group has stated that inservice preparation must be a high priority since existing programs may be short on well prepared personnel and many practitioners will not be able to take time out to attend preservice programs.

3. *THE FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL (FICC) SHOULD ACT AS A CATALYST TO COORDINATE FEDERAL RESOURCES FROM DIFFERENT AGENCIES AND DISCIPLINES FOR PERSONNEL PREPARATION.*

With limited resources available to meet the personnel preparation needs it becomes even more important to direct existing resources into a coordinated plan and commit other key federal agencies to these purposes.

4. *ESTABLISH A NATIONAL JOB BANK FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS, AGES 0-5, TO AID WITH RECRUITMENT PROBLEMS.*

The group believed that there is currently a major problem of distribution of available personnel resources, with rural areas of the country being especially underserved. Any device through which information about job opportunities could be facilitated seemed to be greeted with favor.

5. *THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENCOURAGE FOUNDATIONS AND OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GROUPS TO ASSIST IN PERSONNEL PREPARATION.*

This recommendation was one more recognition of the limited financial resources of the federal government in a time of budget crunch. Relevant federal leadership should seek help from the private sector to meet these important goals.

6. *WE NEED TO ASK FEDERAL LEADERS "WHAT CAN WE (STATES, UNIVERSITIES, AGENCIES, ETC.) DO TO HELP YOU? HOW CAN WE PLAY A MEANINGFUL ROLE IN THIS ENTERPRISE?"*

This statement reflects a desire to work collaboratively to improve personnel preparation, and also recognizes the prime role to be played by the federal government.

GENERIC POLICY ISSUES

In the process of reviewing the outcomes from this options conference, the authors of this report recognized that there were some generic issues worth final comment. The wide variety of decisions that has to be made in the area of policy development and policy implementation sometimes disguises the fact that there may be only two or three basic values being applied to the decision making, over and over again on specific issues. Table 2 indicates the various bipolar choices available to decision makers related to personnel preparation. Each extreme position has some specific advantages. As noted in Table 2, there is an advantage to the choice of state agency control of the training program in the sense that the state agency would be more likely to be responsive to the immediate needs of the field and able to shape training programs to meet those needs. On the other hand, university control would mean the development of standards for personnel that might approach what is considered the best of current practice or theory.

The advantage of one extreme choice is actually what is lost by choosing the other extreme position. For example, the state agency control choice might have the disadvantage that a state might not establish high professional standards in its training programs, being more influenced by its desire to meet the immediate needs of the field.

On the other hand, university control may result in insufficient response to the immediate need for large numbers of service personnel. In any policy decision some kind of balance is struck between the advantages of each of the poles and their accompanying disadvantages.

TABLE 2

POLICY CHOICES
PERSONNEL PREPARATION

State Control	<----------	**University Control**
+		+
Can respond to the clear needs of the field.		Can establish professional standards for personnel.
Single Agency	<----------	**Multiple Agencies**
+		+
Easier to develop a coherent plan that can be implemented over time.		Easier to obtain multi-disciplinary program with many agencies participating.
Preservice	<----------	**Inservice**
+		+
More leadership and highly trained persons available.		Upgrade existing personnel while still on the job. Take care of immediate crisis in personnel.
Personnel Needs	<----------	**Personnel Quality**
+		+
Extreme shortages require a loosening of standards to adequately staff service programs.		There is a need to provide models of the best and most competent personnel preparation in this new area.

Table 2 also illustrates the advantage of having a single agency directing personnel preparation. This choice allows for more immediate efficiency in the development of a coherent plan. However, such a choice can sacrifice the advantage of multiple agency involvement, which could lead to more commitment from many agencies to personnel preparation. The price of the choice of the multiple agency approach is that it may take much longer and involve more substantial negotiations to complete.

The preservice and inservice dichotomy raises similar issues to those of the state/university control dimension. An emphasis on preservice programs would generate more leadership and highly trained persons available to the overall field, while the emphasis on the inservice dimension would upgrade the skills of existing personnel and deal with immediate shortages.

Similarly, there can be a policy balance between personnel needs and personnel quality. If one is responding to the personnel needs dimension, one can make a case for relaxing standards, or adopting a multi-level set of standards, in order to staff a service program. An emphasis on quality should bring forth models of the best and most competent personnel preparation available, but would not necessarily help the shortages in the short run.

The policy decisions that must be made on personnel preparation, as this report indicates, involve many complex issues. As with many other policy decisions, accepting the virtues of any of the options involves embracing its negative components as well. Perhaps that is a part of the reason for delay in any type of decision making. We all keep looking for a painless choice, even as we know that such options rarely exist. Our goal should probably be to understand the issue as thoroughly as possible, to

choose the option with the best positive/negative balance, and move on to implement the programs that best meet our criteria.

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